

School Administrative District No. 3

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March 31, 2008

Susan Gendron, Commissioner of Education
Maine Department of Education
23 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0023

Dear Commissioner Gendron:

As per your correspondence of December 14, 2007, MSAD 3 respectfully submits to you its revised Alternative Plan and the following documents:

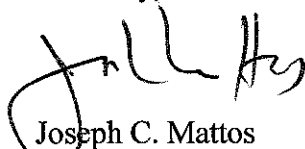
- An updated Submittal Sheet;
- An updated Cover Sheet Checklist;
- A copy of your December 14, 2007 Response from the Commissioner.

It should be noted that the only revisions made to the MSAD 3 Alternative Plan submitted on December 1, 2007 are the following:

1. The actual number of students for the proposed MSAD 3 RSU has been changed to 1,516 to reflect the October 1, 2006 enrollment number that will be used in determining Essential Program and Services Funding.
2. In the Transportation section of the Alternative Plan, #4 (*Shift all special education transportation costs to special education budget accounts.*) has been deleted.
3. A new section has been added at the end of the Alternative Plan providing assurance that *"the projected expenditures in FY 2008-09 for system administration, transportation, special education, and facilities and maintenance will not have an adverse impact on the instructional program."*

Please contact me if you require any additional information or have any questions.

Sincerely,



Joseph C. Mattos
Superintendent of Schools - MSAD 3

Received

Enclosures

APR 01 2008

Maine Department of Education

*Providing the communities of Brooks,
Montville, Thorndike, Troy, Unity and Waldo*



*Freedom, Jackson, Knox, Liberty, Monroe,
with quality educational services since 1958*

ALTERNATIVE PLAN SUBMITTAL SHEET

School Administrative Unit Submitting Alternative Plan:

- Maine School Administrative District 3

Contact Information:

Name: Joseph Mattos
Address: 74 School Street
Unity, Maine
04988
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email: jmattos@msad3.org

Date Plan Submitted by SAU: 3/31/08

The intent to submit an alternative plan has been approved by the Commissioner in the approval of the Notice of Intent?

☒ YES

☐ NO

(If NO, please explain.)

Alternative Plan Cover Sheet

(Please attach Alternative Plan as Exhibit A)

Plan Requirements				
Item	Complete	In Progress	Not Yet Started	Need Assistance ¹
Plan addresses how the SAU will reorganize administrative functions, duties and noninstructional personnel so that projected expenditures of RSU in fiscal 2008-2009 for the following areas will not have an adverse impact on the instructional program.				
system administration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
transportation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
special education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
facilities and maintenance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Plan addresses how cost savings will be achieved in fiscal 2008-2009 for the above four areas.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parameters for Plan Development				
Enrollment meets requirements (2,500 except where circumstances justify an exception)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When viewed in conjunction with surrounding proposed units, may not result in one or more municipalities being denied the option to join an RSU	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Includes at least one publicly supported high school	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consistent with policies set forth in section 1451	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
No displacement of teachers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
No displacement of students	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
No closures of schools existing or operating during school year immediately preceding reorganization, except as permitted under section 1512	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Collaborative Agreements				
		Yes	No	
Does your plan currently include information/documentation on collaborative agreements? (not required, but encouraged)		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

¹ Please explain what assistance you need to complete this portion of your plan, and state from whom you need assistance, on the next page.

Actual number of students for which the SAU is fiscally responsible: 1,516

Exception	Exception Claimed in Plan	Documentation Provided? (Please attach as Exhibit B)	
		Yes	No
Geography	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Demographics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Economics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Population Density	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Unique Circumstances	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Assistance Needs –

Please use this section to describe your needs for assistance and from whom you need assistance.

[illegible]

MSAD 3 Alternative Plan - Revised
March 28, 2008

The following is the MSAD 3 Alternative Plan for reorganizing administrative functions, duties, and non-instructional personnel so that the projected expenditures of MSAD 3 in FY 2008-2009 for system administration, transportation, special education and facilities and maintenance will not have an adverse impact on the instructional program.

Transportation

Although there are significant challenges in transporting students 2200 miles per day to six school sites covering over 400 square miles of rural roads, the MSAD 3 Transportation Department has taken proactive steps over the past three years to reduce transportation costs. Specifically, MSAD has:

- Participated with MSAD 34 and MSAD 56 in a grant funded, feasibility study for creating a regional bus maintenance facility.
- Used bus routing software (Edulog) to improve transportation efficiencies. Results have included a reduction in bus runs and total daily mileage, as well as reduced time for students riding buses.
- Increased system revenue by providing bus maintenance services for the area Head Start program.

In addition to these steps, the following have been identified as areas where future cost savings and efficiencies may be achieved:

1. Investigate replacing the current K-6 and 9-12 double bus run system with a single, PK-12 bus run system.
2. Investigate contracting with a private company for transportation services.
3. Restructure the responsibilities of the Director of Transportation.
4. Evaluate starting points of bus runs and bus storage.
5. Evaluate costs and need for school field trips.

Facilities and Maintenance

The costs of maintaining seven, separate building facilities provide a significant challenge to MSAD 3 in meeting the per pupil EPS allocation for facilities and maintenance, which does not take into account the number of school buildings maintained by a school system. Additionally, MSAD 3 is aware that there may be some unknown facility costs associated with the completion of the new Mt. View School (Spring 2009).

Since significant cost savings can only be achieved through the reduction of facility square footage and/or custodial personnel, one recommended option for reducing MSAD 3 facility and maintenance costs once the new school complex is completed is to close the existing central office facility. Specifically,

- Existing program services for system technology, Special Education, and the School Nutrition Program currently housed in the central office facility would move into the new complex.
- Administrative services (Superintendent and business operations) would move into classroom space at one of the system elementary schools, once classrooms are vacated by grade six students moving into MVJHS.

This recommendation would result in costs savings in electricity, heat, insurance, and custodial services.

Additional recommended options for reducing facility and maintenance costs include:

1. Conducting energy efficiency studies at all elementary school facilities.
2. Consolidating School Nutrition Program services.
3. Contracting with a private company for custodial services at new school complex.

Special Education

Because of state and federal mandates requiring special education services for identified students and for maintaining specific levels of financial support ("*maintenance of effort*") for special education school programs, MSAD 3 is reluctant to make any recommendations for reducing special education costs. However, MSAD 3 recognizes that reducing the number of identified students requiring special education services from the present level of 20% to the state's target of 16% may significantly reduce costs for special education services.

As a way of reducing the number of students who qualify for special education services, while at the same time addressing students' educational needs, MSAD 3 is piloting the RTI (Response to Intervention) program, which identifies students and assists teachers in working with these students to address individualized learning issues, without requiring additional special education services. The RTI program should address issues of over identification for SE services and subsequently reduce costs for special education services.

In addition, the following will be evaluated as a way of reducing costs for special education services:

- Provide in-district programs for students who have been in outside of district residential programs.
- Evaluate the need and effectiveness of several special education positions.
- Evaluate current processes and stipends paid teachers for performing specific work functions.
- Reevaluate special education summer school program.
- Coordinate Day Treatment and Life Skill programs at the new school complex.

System/School Administration

Over the past several years MSAD 3 has undergone considerable changes in school and central office administration staffing and responsibilities. Central office has lost two positions - Assistant Superintendent and Curriculum Coordinator. Coupled with these reductions, specific responsibilities for overseeing system programs (Title 1, NCLB, GT, Curriculum, Assessment, 21st Century Grants, Summer School, etc.) have been delegated to school principals. This model has resulted in a lack of coordination and oversight in monitoring and improving student learning, and has adversely impacted on the quality of the MSAD 3 instructional program.

MSAD 3 is committed to reducing administrative costs but not at the expense of compromising the quality of student learning. Future recommendations for reducing school and system administrative costs include:

1. Design and staff a central office administrative structure that is focused on student learning and operates in an efficient manner.
2. Vacate the present central office facility once the new school complex is completed.
3. Evaluate all current lease/purchase contracts.
4. Increase job efficiencies for specific administrative positions.
5. Reevaluate present elementary school administrative structure
6. Review and evaluate need for contractual, stipended positions.
7. Outsource school system payroll.

Adult and Community Education Program

MSAD 3 believes that the Adult and Community Education Program is an important component in providing educational services to the students and citizens in MSAD 3. As a way of reducing costs, while maintaining or expanding the quality of programming, MSAD 3 will investigate the following option for future action:

1. Share space and/or consolidate programs and administrative services with the WCTC Adult Education Program.

Vocational/Technical Program

Currently MSAD 3 participates with MSAD 34 and MSAD 56 in sharing costs for the operation of the Waldo County Technical Center. Although any changes in school programs and/or administrative functions would need to be approved by the regional WCTC governing board, MSAD 3 will be forwarding the following recommendations to the WCTC governing board for their consideration in reducing future costs, creating efficiencies, and improving educational services:

1. Evaluate the current WCTC school schedule. Consider changes that would increase students' instructional time and reduce sending schools transportation costs.
2. Consider consolidating the WCTC business manager position and responsibilities with MSAD 3, MSAD 34 or MSAD 56.
3. Consider consolidating maintenance and/or custodial services with MSAD 3, MSAD 34 or MSAD 56.
4. Increase utilization of WCTC facilities and programs.

Collaborative Agreements

MSAD 3 participates in collaborate agreements with area school systems for achieving efficiencies and reducing costs in the delivery of administration, instruction, and non-instructional functions. Existing collaborative agreements include:

- Vocational/technical educational programming with MSAD 34, MSAD 56, and MSAD 3.
- Purchasing contracts with MSAD 34 for paper products and custodial supplies.
- Shared professional development and training opportunities for MSAD 3, MSAD 34 and MSAD 54 teachers and staff
- School Nutrition Program purchasing agreement with the Kennebec Alliance.

MSAD 3 has recently joined the Kennebec Alliance in order to engage in future collaborative agreements for teacher professional development, staff training, and purchasing agreements.

Other Potential Areas for Cost Savings beyond 2008-2009

Although this Alternative Plan is only intended to address projected expenditures in FY 08/09, MSAD 3 believes that the completion of the new Mt. View School complex in 2009 will create future opportunities for cost savings, program efficiencies and enhancements.

Assurance Requirement in P.L. Chapter 240, Part XXXX-36(6)(F)

In order to address the requirement in P.L. Chapter 240, Part XXXX-36(6)(F) that a proposed RSU provide assurance that "the projected expenditures in FY 2008-09 for system administration, transportation, special education, and facilities and maintenance will not have an adverse impact on the instructional program", MSAD 3 has had to define the meaning and intent of the phrase "*adverse impact on the instructional program.*" Given little guidance and clarification regarding the meaning or intent of this phrase, MSAD 3 has defined this phrase to mean that there will be no reductions in instructional programs or instructional personnel in the

08/09 MSAD budget (as compared to the 07/08 MSAD budget) that result directly from the projected expenditures in FY 2008-09 for system administration, transportation, special education, and facilities and maintenance.

Although the final 08/09 MSAD 3 budget has not been adopted by the school board or voted on by MSAD 3 residents, at this point in time MSAD 3 will be recommending to voters a budget that maintains all existing instructional programs and instructional staff. MSAD 3 is able to provide this assurance by adopting changes recommended by the community Alternative Plan Committee such as:

- Improving the efficiency of bus routes and reducing transportation personnel costs
- Decreasing a staff position and staff hours at Central Office
- Reducing a K-6 school administration (principal) position
- Establishing more efficient testing and psychological contract services

Additional cost savings in facilities and maintenance will occur in 09/10 when the new Mount View School opens and K-6 schools are reconfigured, and the central office building closes and its services moved into an existing K-6 school.

At this point in time, MSAD 3 believes it has met the requirement in P.L. Chapter 240, Part XXXX-36(6)(F) for assuring that *the projected expenditures in FY 2008-09 for system administration, transportation, special education, and facilities and maintenance will not have an adverse impact on the instructional program.*